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Supervisor Skills Reference Guide. 2013

Maine Bureau of Human Resources

Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services

Supervisor Skills Reference Guide

Bureau of Human Resources
HR Programs Unit

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RECRUITING

Part of any good hiring practice is to clearly understand the position for which you are hiring. Another component is to cast a wide enough net to increase the number of choices. Too little time is spent on seeking talent beyond the immediate "known world". This does not speak against internal transfers or promotions, but instead recognizes that outside talents can energize an agency. The goal is to get the best people into the key positions.

1. Determine what position duties you most need and the skill set needed to do it. (*See Reclassifications*)
2. Determine how this position aligns with the mission of the agency.
3. Determine the most likely places to find people with those skills.
4. Invite people most affected by the position to be involved in the selection process.
5. Promote the organization and the job to the new hire candidates.

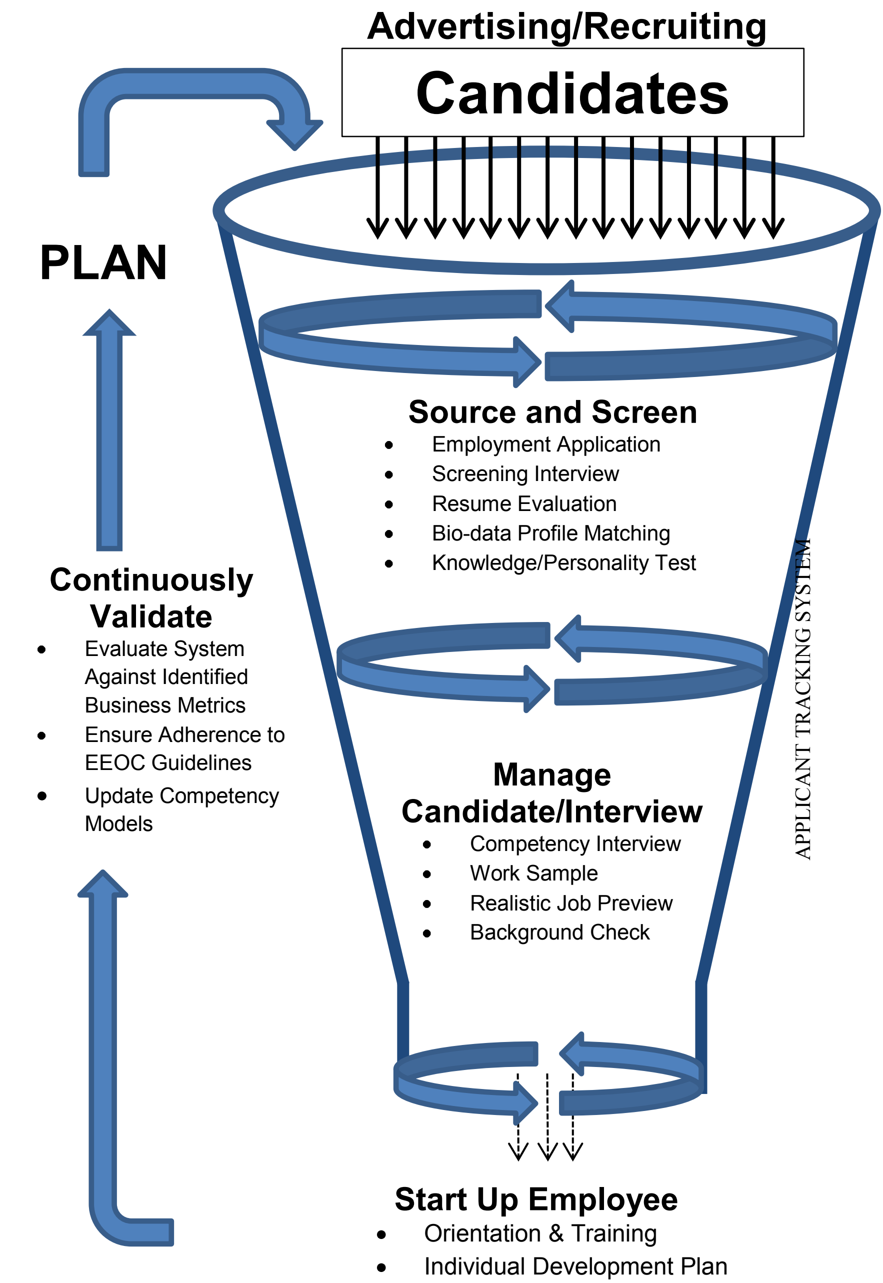
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Supervisors are the key to the State's compliance with Federal and State EEO non-discrimination laws. Supervisors need to be familiar with all of the State policies governing EEO (e.g. Policy Statement Against Harassment, Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Policy Statement, Policy and Procedure for Processing Requests from Employees and Applicants for Reasonable Accommodations Including Reassignment). All are available on the Bureau of Human Resources website.

Respectful, equitable and consistent treatment of employees will protect supervisors from most complaints of discrimination. Some important highlights from the above policies are as follows:

1. Any behavior of a sexual nature or that degrades, ridicules or otherwise draws unwanted attention to any employee on the basis of categories delineated in the policy is considered unprofessional and grounds for disciplinary action.
2. Supervisors are required to actively prevent or stop inappropriate, unprofessional conduct in the workplace and must consult with their Department's EEO Coordinator (most often the HR Director) if they become aware either through personal observation or information from a third party.
3. Any form of retaliatory action by either employees or supervisors against any person filing a complaint under the State's EEO policies is grounds for disciplinary action.
4. Supervisors are prohibited from keeping any doctors' notes or other medical information. These must be sent to Human Resources.

5. All requests for accommodations due to a disability or medical condition, no matter how small, must be forwarded to the Department's EEO Coordinator. No request for accommodation shall be approved or denied prior to review by the agency EEO Coordinator or the State EEO Coordinator and a determination that the decision is consistent with both state and federal law and state policy.


Advertising/Recruiting
Candidates
PLAN
Source and Screen
Employment Application
Screening Interview
Resume Evaluation
Bio-data Profile Matching
Knowledge/Personality Test
Continuously Validate
Evaluate System Against Identified Business Metrics
Ensure Adherence to EEOC Guidelines
Update Competency Models
APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEM
Manage Candidate/Interview
Competency Interview
Work Sample
Realistic Job Preview
Background Check
Start Up Employee
Orientation & Training
Individual Development Plan

SELECTION

Selection might be the most important task you are involved in. If not done well, it can cause problems for you and your agency for many years to come. The selection process starts when there is an opening. It ends at the end of the probationary period. The following information is to help guide your thinking as you are the person who best knows what knowledge and skills are needed and how a person can successfully fit into your team.

1. **What to do when an opening occurs:**
   a) Consider the critical functional elements of what you need the position to accomplish. You may realize that you do not need another "Management Analyst" but you do need a "Planning and Research Assistant". Therefore, seek a Planning and Research Assistant.
   b) This may require a job classification change; if so, a FJA-1 needs to be completed and submitted for reclassification (call HR/see Reclassifications p.57). Familiarize yourself with the timeline for processing such requests.
   c) Check with HR on possible funding issues.
   d) Submit "Request to Fill Position" form.
2. **Planning for the interview**
   a) Revise/edit/develop the job description.
   b) Determine the recruiting method (e.g., Open Competitive, Direct Hire; how will you advertise? Web, newspaper, trade journals, etc.) .
   c) Determine the selection criteria/method.
      * Who is on the interview team?

- ∗ What questions will be asked?
- ∗ By whom?
- ∗ Will there be skill testing or work samples?
- ∗ How will references be checked?

d) Determine how candidates will be evaluated (avoid using arbitrary scales e.g., 1-10).

e) Determine an interview timeline.

f) Review applications and select candidates.

g) Be mindful of any under-represented groups.

3. The interview

a) Know your responsibilities and be prepared.

b) Make each candidate feel welcome/comfortable.

c) Follow pre-determined interview process.

d) Take comprehensive notes on each candidate.

e) Ask follow-up questions.

- ∗ Do not *only* ask the interview questions, dig into the answers the candidate gives.
- ∗ Ask about the supplemental responses on the application.
- ∗ Ask about employment history on the resume.
- ∗ Ask about gaps between employment.
- ∗ Ask about self-assessment from the application process (when applicable).

f) Jointly discuss candidates after interviews.

g) Retain interview records in accordance with the State of Maine record retention schedule.

4. Follow-up

a) Verify documentation.

b) Follow reference check procedures.
c) Determine if more information is needed.

5. **Decide**
   a) Consider bargaining agreement requirements such as consideration of years of State service.
   b) Jointly choose the best candidate.
   c) Offer the job verbally and in writing.
   d) Determine starting date and salary.
   e) Be enthusiastic when talking to the new hire.
6. **Probation**
   a) Use this as intended-is this the right person?
   b) Orient the new employee (include policy, procedures, collective bargaining agreements).
   c) Establish performance expectations.
   d) Monitor performance. .

While the sky is the limit on job related questions that you may ask during an interview, there are certain questions that you cannot ask. They are not job related but could give a perception of influencing a hiring decision, and they are not allowable according to EEO laws.

Questions that cannot be asked include:

1. Age, date of birth
2. Birthplace
3. Weight or height
4. Any military training obligations
5. Religious affiliation
6. Union affiliation
7. Child care obligations
8. Future child bearing plans
9. Do you have children?
10. Sexual orientation
11. Marital status
12. Race/race of spouse
13. Worker's comp history
14. Disability-related question (e.g., can you do this job without accommodations?)

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

Leadership is needed more today than ever, as changes

come at us with accelerating speed. This need to more openly embrace change requires people to be comfortable with innovations, accountability, visions of greatness, and more. Some leadership traits require risk taking and becoming vulnerable to people and forces working against us. But history favors the bold. So examine some of these principles and determine which you can do or do more frequently.

1. Being responsible sometimes makes people angry.
2. The day people stop bringing you their problems is the day you stopped leading them.
3. You don't know what you can get away with until you try.
4. Keep looking beneath the surface even if you may find things that you don't like.

5. Only when attracting and retaining the best people can you do your best work.
6. Never let your ego get so close to the job that when the job goes or changes, your ego goes with it.
7. Optimism is a force multiplier.
8. When the probability of success passes 50% with the information available, follow your gut/experience and make a decision.
9. The leader in the field is always right and HQ is always wrong, unless proved otherwise.

Source: Colin Powell Primer on Leadership

SUPERVISORY PRINCIPLES

There are some general supervisory principles or concepts that many supervisors find helpful. They can be useful in staying grounded, especially under pressure. They include:

1. About 95% of what we know came from other sources (parents, teachers, books) and 5% from experience. But, we use our experience about 50% of the time, so build positive experiences into the work environment.
2. Most people have all this information in their head and use little of it, falling back on a few basic ways to handle most situations.
3. When planning the work, plan for things beyond the “must do” and add some “should do” and “nice to do” items.
4. When someone does not do what was asked of them determine if they did not follow instructions because they *COULD* not do or *WOULD* not do the task- your intervention with this person may change based on whether or not they were able to perform the task you’ve asked them to do.
5. Have failure and success standards for all jobs to help avoid creating a risk-averse climate, i.e., “if I don’t try, I can’t fail.”
6. Send the indispensable person away for a while so others will get proficient in all critical tasks.
7. Delegation without clear expectations is abdication.

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8. Avoid people who won't ever do what you ask of them and those who do EXACTLY what you ask them to do.
9. Your best people and worst people break the rules the most. Be aware of WHY your staff is breaking rules.
10. Give authority along with responsibility.
11. Motivation has, at its root, dissatisfaction.
12. People think they are better than they think their boss thinks they are.
13. The 80/20 rule applies to several areas of supervision:
    * 80% of the power is in 20% of staff.
    * 80% of problems come from 20% of staff.
    * 80% of work is done by 20% of staff.
14. There are two "tyrannies"- change and another's opinion. A tyranny is something over which you have little or no control.

15. There are only three ways to change someone's personality: deep psychotherapy, brain surgery, or a religious conversion. Unless you are good at these, don't try to change someone's personality.
16. When people do things you don't like, ask "so what?" If it continues, ask yourself "does it hurt business?" You might ask yourself another question as well, "if I ignore it, will it hurt business?"

INTERPERSONAL PRINCIPLES

Supervisors should be guided by certain basic principles of behavior or actions when interacting with other people. If these principles are generally followed, many challenging supervisory issues can be either prevented or reduced in their severity. While they are likely obvious to most of us, they are commonly ignored.

1. Focus on the issue, the behavior, or the situations- not on the person; that is, don’t make it personal.
2. Whatever the reason for the interaction, leave the person with their self-esteem and with self-confidence.
3. Maintain constructive (not destructive) relationships with all people.
4. Take the initiative to make things better. Someone must go first in improving things.
5. Lead by example because you are a role model.
6. Enable others to succeed.
7. Challenge things that are not working well.
8. Facilitate professional growth in people around you.
9. Create a sense of hope in a positive future.
10. Offer support through respectful communication.

Source: Achieve Global and Participative Design

BUILDING TRUST

Trust is a critical supervisor commodity. People will not do the most routine tasks or take the least significant risks if they do not trust. Further, they will not follow when risks increase or their own instincts tell them that this is not a good idea. Too many supervisors undervalue words and deeds that undermine trust. They do not seem to recognize the damage done and how long-lasting that damage can be.

1. As much as possible, do the things you say you will do.
2. Do not over promise.
3. Do not do things that you did not first talk to people about if your action affects them.
4. Be aware that “history” is still alive and well within some people and they will surface it when it is useful to them (if you were “untrustworthy” 7 years ago, they still remember).
5. Some people naturally are somewhat suspicious until those suspicions are eliminated. You must actively work to eliminate these suspicions.
6. If you interfere in the ordinary and daily work of your staff, they believe that you don’t trust them and their abilities.

DELEGATION

You can't do everything. And you should not try. Your people have competencies, ambition, and incentives. Further, they all need to grow in a climate of success. Therefore, you need to delegate, including, at times, when you get a little nervous. After all, people gave you a chance to grow because at one time, you were not a supervisor. There is a rule of thumb on delegation. It is, "if another person can do the job as well as, or better, than you under current circumstances, DELEGATE.

1. Before delegating, ask yourself if the person understands what you are asking.
2. Simultaneously, ask yourself if they have the skills to do the task.
3. Next, determine if they will or won't do what you are asking.

4. Determine the likelihood of the results being done right or not.
5. Establish a feedback mechanism so that you know what is going on during the task and what the results are.
6. Finally, if you decide to delegate, do so and get out of the way.

Source: Maine Event Management

MOTIVATION

How can you as a supervisor motivate your staff? Essentially, you can't. You can only provide a variety of motivators from which your team members will choose what motivates them. It could be more autonomy, access to the boss, praise, or public recognition. People are motivated by different things. As a supervisor, it is your job to figure out what motivates your employees. Trying to provide that mix of things that will motivate people is not easy, because some of those things don't motivate you. And it's hard to imagine that they motivate others. Some general things to consider:

1. Measure people against a standard, preferably one mutually developed, so all that meet the standard "win."
2. Do not offer secondary incentives to get people to do the initial task (e.g. ice cream for cleaning your room). It will appear that the task has little merit.
3. Rewards only motivate in the short run but de-motivate in the long run (in spite of what many people believe).

4. Rewards are very effective if given AFTER someone has done

noteworthy things. It demonstrates that the boss recognized their extra effort therefore motivating staff to continue the behavior.

5. Teams, where all members contribute to a specific success, create a desire to do their “fair share” (versus being a small part in a more general success).
6. Giving staff authority with responsibility motivates most people.
7. Share the meaningful work among all staff.
8. Assure that everyone feels a part of things.
9. Let staff demonstrate their competencies.

MENTORING

Supervisors have an obligation to mentor people if they desire it. There are things about supervisors that others admire. It may be your decisiveness, your ability to handle sensitive political issues, or your innate fairness. Others want to know where your confidence came from, where you learned a particular skill or your thought process as you work through a problem. Great organizations make sure that their best people act as mentors to assure that the best qualities of the agency are spread around. Great mentors:

1. Are patient with those wanting to learn (protégés)
2. Ask and answer questions
3. Allow protégés to do things their way and then discuss the process and outcome
4. Share knowledge (no “holding back” to assure being needed).
5. Instill confidence in protégé skills
6. Discuss their experiences to build a context for why and how you do what you do
7. Help the protégé set goals and determine how to advance within the agency

RESPECTFUL SUPERVISION

The workplace climate is very much a function of supervisory behavior. An inadequate climate can have a negative impact on the work output, the quality of work, and the attitude of staff. A key to an optimal work climate is the level of respect offered to people collectively and individually. Respected people work hard and well, and in turn tend to respect others. This includes those we serve. Some examples of respectful behavior are:

1. Listening to people
2. Including people (in conversations, decisions, etc.)
3. Giving all people their share of meaningful work
4. Giving people as much control over their work as is possible
5. Displaying fairness
6. Showing integrity
7. Offering compassion
8. Demonstrating honesty
9. Stopping the rumoring/gossiping that you see/hear
10. Not embarrassing or humiliating people

11. Allowing people to demonstrate their competence
12. Recognizing deserving people in a way valued by them

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

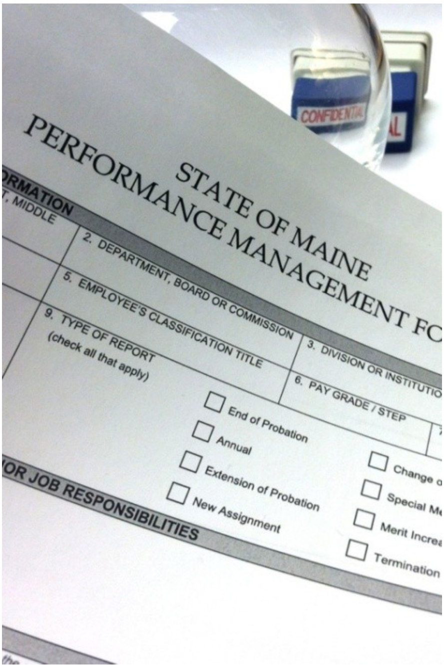
Performance management is the most important supervisory task that people DON'T like to do. It is sometimes seen as unnecessary since people have the perception that they have been on the job and know how to do their work. Or, they are at the top of the pay scale and will not receive additional merit increases regardless of how well or mediocre they may have performed during the last year. And, some say, it is uncomfortable to set and then review performance expectations- it creates tension.

NOT doing performance reviews is unfair. Most employees want to know how they are performing; they have a right to know what their jobs are and what the manager expects. Additionally, they have the right to know if their performance is matching those expectations, both for their benefit and for the benefit of the customers we serve. Further, when a member of a team is not performing to expectations, the rest of the team will suffer as they will often need to "pick up the slack". This situation will cause more tension than an individual performance review.

Performance management should be considered an opportunity to ensure staff members are on track with organizational and personal professional goals.

1. The performance management session should be a discussion with clarifications and feedback, with confidentiality honored, and free from interruptions.
2. Expectations should focus on the major duties of the job.
3. Expectations should be measurable.

4. Some expectations should challenge each employee to develop their professional skills and abilities.
5. Frequent feedback discussions should occur so that no problem performance goes on for very long or timeline expectation goes unmet. There should be NO year-end surprises during the formal review. If there are issues in performance, they should be addressed if they occur anytime during the year.



6. Performance expectations will vary somewhat from one person to the next.

ESTABLISHING PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

Right at the heart of a supervisor's responsibility is the need to ensure your staff knows what is expected of them. Otherwise, supervisors are setting the stage for unmet expectations and emotional responses that result from needs not being met. By setting expectations, supervisors send a message that they want staff to succeed and that success is not some guessing game.

1. Describe the job in terms of major OUTCOMES and how the job fits into the larger agency picture.
2. Agree on the measurable performance criteria.
3. Mutually identify needed skills, resources, or guidelines to succeed in this job.
4. Mutually set priorities.
5. Seek feedback to assure understanding and commitment.
6. Establish periodic progress reviews.
7. Keep the tone of these discussions respectful and positive.

Source: Achieve Global

COACHING FOR OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE

Many people respond well to the occasional coaching by someone known to have expertise or who has experienced success. Many supervisors are in their positions because of successes that they have enjoyed. They are in a position to coach others toward higher performance which benefits the agency and those served by it.

Coaching is not only an opportunity to check-in with employees to discuss and resolve low performance problems before they become big issues, but a chance to solidify expectations, provide positive feedback and increase morale.

Coaching does not need to be formal or even take up too much time; however, it should be done privately. When approached thoughtfully, taking the time to coach is an excellent way to enhance performance.

1. Clarify the performance topic that is being coached and why it is important.
2. Use open ended questions to seek the employee's opinion on how they currently perceive their performance.
3. Ask the employee how he thinks he could improve his performance.

4. Provide feedback and offer your own thoughts, i.e., have a

"powerful conversation" as defined as one in which both people leave having learned something important.

5. Summarize the coaching and set a future date for follow-up assessment of progress.
6. Express confidence and support.

Source: Achieve Global

SOLVING PROBLEMS

Not all problems lend themselves to following a "formula." Some are highly complex while others have only been met with marginal success in the past. Therefore a formal process could be your best choice. While intuition, hunches, and analysis can assist any process, a general model offers a path when you are at a loss as to how to proceed.

1. Describe the problem by listing its symptoms, i.e. low morale, increased turnover, more customer complaints. Be careful not to list possible solutions as a description of the problem, i.e., "we need more staff or money." These are possible solutions to some problems, not in and of themselves problems.
2. Determine LIKELY causes for the problem, describe as a list of symptoms.
3. Choose a LIKELY solution to the likely causes.
4. Take steps to reduce/eliminate causes.
5. If the problem is not solved, go back to the originally noted less likely "causes" and seek solutions to them until the problem is solved.

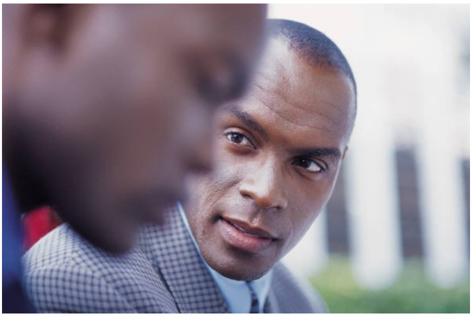
Source: Achieve Global

PARTICIPATING IN PROBLEM SOLVING

Whether it is you or your staff, problems solved well often have several people with special knowledge, skills, or abilities actively contributing. A poor process either does not invite them into the solution process or ignores them if they contribute. The more people involved, typically the better the solution with increased buy-in/ownership. It's been said that "nobody has an ugly baby." Therefore, make sure that this "baby" belongs to many people and they will fight to defend, not oppose, the solution.

1. Avoid tangents and focus on the problem.
2. Invite frequent ideas and offer your own (in that order).
3. Encourage others to challenge contributions, assumptions, and excuses for not continuing, i.e. "that won't work, we tried that 6 years ago, the boss will never accept this."
4. Agree on a plan of action.
5. Make sure that all participants have tasks within the plan to increase commitment.

Source: Achieve Global



PROBLEM SOLUTION TYPES

Supervisors have ongoing personnel and operational challenges. There are five different types of solutions that should be considered, which allow for a range of responses. Each serves a purpose, allowing the supervisor to realize more success while better serving staff and the community.

1. Preventative solutions- issues/problems are anticipated, pro-activity occurs, experience suggests that certain things will occur and actions to prevent them are used.
2. Interim solutions- sometimes action on an issue/problem is needed now; a supervisor uses his/her best judgment based on knowledge and experience to put a temporary solution in place.
3. Adaptive solutions- some solutions do not have to

"go back to the drawing board" but just require a tweaking of current practices.

4. Contingency solutions- real problem-solving stars can look into the future and develop a solution to a problem that has not, and may not, occur. These solutions are kept in a drawer until needed.
5. Corrective action solutions- these solutions are new, changing a current practice or policy and eliminating the way “we used to do something.”

Source: Main Event Management

MAKING DECISIONS

It is one thing to analyze a problem and suggest a solution. It is quite another thing to “pull the trigger” and make a decision. Managers who have less experience tend to lean more heavily on policy when making decisions. More experienced managers lean more on policy, facts *and* their experience.

1. Policy- Policy, procedures, rules and regulations offer concrete guidance to decision-making. They offer support and justification for the decision, but often will reduce the decision to a “black-white” exercise.
2. Facts- Managers need to verify that which they did not observe. While facts tend to be seen differently by different people, many are not in dispute and can steer a supervisor toward a more supportable decision.
3. Experience- Before managers can lean on or use experience, they must have experience. The point is that they should use their experiences to sometimes override a “text book” response. It takes correct interpretations of experiences to glean the “truths” from them.
4. Intuition- People have hunches or “gut feelings” that are probably based on several things. It is hard to pinpoint why we have a feeling that this solution is good, but we do. There is nothing wrong with this mode, but recognize that it is less defensible.

CONFIDENTIALITY

There are things that supervisors know, based on their position, which must not be repeated. In some cases, what is confidential is mandated by law. In other cases, it is mandated by policy. In yet other cases, it is determined by professional tact and discretion. Please be careful in work or off-work conversations to maintain appropriate confidentiality. A breach of confidential information is a serious supervisory mistake.

1. Don't talk about staff that has arranged for or gone to an Employee Assistance Program session.
2. Don't reveal any items about a counseling, verbal reprimand, or any part of disciplinary process you were involved in.
3. Don't talk about any performance review issues.
4. Don't talk about what goes on during a personnel investigation.
5. Don't talk about personal information about other people such as what their kids are doing, that her

mother-in-law moved in, they bought a new car, etc.

6. Don’t talk about someone’s medical/physical condition such as them having poor eyesight, having cancer, being overweight, taking “x” medication, etc.
7. Don’t talk about anyone engaged in legal action.
8. Apply a “reasonable person” standard to any conversation. If I and other reasonable people would not want people to talk about this issue concerning me, don’t talk about this to others.
9. Don’t talk about any American with Disability Act accommodations made for someone.

TEAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervisors need to build permanent and temporary teams. Once done, team members support each other, share resources, and build stronger agencies. Team dynamics can be difficult to manage due to style and substance differences. But there are ways to get synergy (1+1=3) if certain actions are taken.

1. Clarify the team's purpose and what impact it could have on organizational success.
2. Describe expected team results and the standards of conduct expected from team members.
3. Agree on team member roles/responsibilities.
4. Determine, as a team, procedures and needed resources for success.
5. Determine how team members can support and assist each other to better assure success.
6. Establish a feedback mechanism to monitor success and allow for adjustments to the original strategy.

Source: Achieve Global

USING "KASH" TO IMPROVE THE TEAM

KASH is an acronym for Knowledge, Abilities, Skills and Habits (or attitudes) at work. Supervisors are well advised to determine these for all those whom you supervise. That is, who knows the most about certain key tasks or responsibilities? Who has the ability to see what needs to be done? Who is skilled at X task? Whose work habits should be modeled?

1. Know yourself and your team, as individuals, based on their amount of KASH.
2. Make assignments, mentor relationships, and critical work based on an individual's KASH.
3. Make sure to grow employees' KASH to prepare them for more challenges, promotions, and success so that the organization continues to enjoy success.
4. By not using employees' KASH appropriately, you frustrate staff, lower morale, miss opportunities to improve.

Source: Main Event Management

RESOLVING TEAM CONFLICT

Team members will sometimes disagree on methods or content. This is especially true during the "forming-storming" stages of team development. However, reasons for team conflict are often predictable. Supervisors who intervene quickly and well can keep most teams functioning and not deteriorating into inaction or factions.

1. Promptly let team members know how their

   actions are affecting team performance.
2. Create a joint problem solving session with both people having the conflict meeting together, with you, without previous "one-on-one" sessions with you.
3. Ask both sides to present their view, as objectively as possible, without assumptions intruding, and without interruptions.
4. Find areas of factual agreement and clarify the disagreement (where "facts" are in dispute).

5. Have both parties offer possible solutions, then you offer some as well.
6. From the possibilities, agree on strategy to be followed and get commitment to employ it.
7. Summarize the agreement and schedule follow-up.

Source: Achieve Global

TAKING CORRECTIVE ACTION

All people make mistakes of omission and commission. Or they were never trained to do some task and try to do it within their abilities. Regardless, there are times when, as supervisors, uncivil behavior can't be allowed to damage the agency. During this action take care not to intimidate or patronize the person.

Before taking *any* action, consult your agency Human Resources representative to ensure you are following the proper actions/steps.

If HR recommends counseling, the following information will be helpful in guiding you through the situation.

Adhere to the facts of the situation:

1. Point out the difference between performance expectations (as established) and present behavior.
2. Explain how the behavior is having a negative impact.
3. Seek employee feedback about your explanation in order to ensure you are communicating the information clearly.
4. Mutually generate possible solutions.

5. Be clear about why the agreed-upon steps are being taken.
6. Create an action plan with specific goals and dates for follow-up.
7. Offer support that the situation will be corrected.
8. Document the conversation.
   * Have employee sign document, or make a note if employee refuses to sign.
   * Retain record

If a situation requires disciplinary action, you must consult HR first.

PROVIDING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Feedback is at the core of effective communication. People get feedback on performance and interpersonal behaviors. The purpose of any feedback is to open a dialogue that reduces the likelihood of misunderstandings or misperceptions. Further, it allows for a closer alignment of expectations between a supervisor and an employee.

1. Establish the purpose of your feedback so employees don't have to guess, e.g., correcting behavior, helping them to fit in.

2. Describe what you have observed; not what you have heard or inferred.
3. Explain your reaction to what you have observed. Make sure that your reaction affects business rather than being a personal preference.
4. Encourage the other person to respond to your observation/reaction.
5. Jointly offer specific suggestions as to how to make changes.
6. Summarize the discussion while offering support.

Source: Achieve Global

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

Progressive discipline is negotiated through bargaining contracts and must be adhered to for any misconduct actions involving bargaining unit employees. The concept is built around discipline being constructive in order to fix a problem. While not required to always follow the progressive steps, most disciplinary actions lend themselves to this approach. Each step has requirements related to time spans and documentation, so it is important to know the basics.

“The purpose of progressive discipline is NOT to punish an employee for the sake of punishment alone. Rather, the purpose is to make clear to an employee that his or her behavior is not acceptable, and to provide that employee with an opportunity to adjust that behavior accordingly. The discipline imposed should be the minimum level that is necessary to achieve this goal.” – Philip J. Dunn, Arbitrator

In cases of substandard performance or misbehavior situations, consulting HR will help guide you to the course of action.

1. Ask HR: "Have I exhausted all the tools in the performance management system?" This includes a documented counseling.
2. Ask HR: "Do I have sufficient documentation of the event(s) leading to the disciplinary action and the employee’s related performance history?"
3. Ask HR: "Do I have "just cause" to take disciplinary action?"
    a) Was the violation related to orderly, safe, and efficient operations or the expected performance from this person?

   b) Have I forewarned the employee of the possible consequences of her/his performance/misconduct?
   c) Have I documented the facts through a fair investigation?
   d) Do I have substantial evidence to proceed?
   e) Have I consulted with my supervisor and HR to confirm that my proposed action is reasonable and consistent with other similar disciplinary actions? Note: You must notify your supervisor and HR prior to suspending, demoting, or discharging any employee.
4. Ask yourself: “Have I selected the appropriate level of discipline?" That means the lowest level likely to result in the desired behavioral change, listed below in order:*
   a) Oral reprimand
   b) Written warning (Only MSEA Bargaining Contract)
   c) Written reprimand
   d) Written reprimand in lieu of suspension (this is recommended when suspension is not appropriate such as when a person who is frequently late or takes time off at bad times, more time off would not be effective; carries the weight of suspension)
   e) Suspension
   f) Demotion
   g) Dismissal

* Note: Counseling, though not a part of progressive discipline, may be done prior to the initial disciplinary step in cases of minor misconduct or poor performance

as a "heads up" about what is coming if changes are not made.

5. Ask yourself: "If I am skipping or repeating a step, have I properly documented my reasons for doing so?" (e.g., severity of the misconduct, already used prior step.)
6. Ask yourself: "Did I protect the employee's right to due process?"

When taking action involving the loss of job or money, employees have a right to:

* Notice in writing of discipline to be taken prior to action, including the proposed outcome
* Explanation and understanding of charges
* Explanation and understanding of the process
* Explanation of the evidence (the actual evidence or a copy of the report/supporting documents)
* Opportunity to meet with the appointing authority or his/her designee prior to action taken
* Right to union representation

During steps 1-6, remember that the employee has a right to confidentiality; so err on the side of too much confidentiality.

PREVENTING GRIEVANCES

Grievances will happen when people feel that an injustice has occurred, that they are not being heard, or that they are being treated unfairly. However, many grievances can be prevented. With confidence that they can be prevented, supervisors should be willing to be assertive in their leadership versus being passive out of fear of a grievance being filed.

1. Read and follow the relevant union contract(s).
2. Treat employees as individuals.
3. Try to understand the employee's perspective.
4. Enforce policies and rules with consistency.
5. Actively look for and address tensions or friction among staff.
6. Avoid favoritism - real or perceived.
7. Admit mistakes.
8. Apologize when appropriate.
9. Communicate, communicate, communicate.

HANDLING A GRIEVANCE

First remember that Human Resources will assist you through this process. Some grievances are due to misunderstandings or factors that can be resolved early if the supervisor approaches the issue with confidence and a skill set.

The following are some guidelines that will help you through the grievance process. Always remember once a grievance is filed, there is a formal process that MUST be followed.

1. **The setting and the problem:**
    a) Be accessible and timely.
    b) Listen carefully and check that both sides understand what is being said.
    c) Talk in a place that is private and accommodating. There should be no interruptions.
    d) Be tolerant of reasonable displays of emotion, as emotions must be expressed

before employees are often able to be logical. Remember, feelings are facts to that person.

e) Don't procrastinate! Address the issue at the earliest time possible.

f) End the discussion on a positive, even supportive, note while not being unrealistic or offering commitments.

2. **Get the facts straight:**

   a) When bargaining unit employees file a complaint it is a grievance (if there is reported harassment, you must report this to your Human Resource EEO contact).

   b) Verify if the employee has met the contractual time limit; note the timeliness issue to report to HR.

   c) Where appropriate, you may have to review records or interview staff to gather all the facts; this would be done in partnership with HR.

   d) Review policies/procedures, and check with your supervisor and HR before responding to the employee.

   e) Review appropriate employee records for background.

   f) Carefully document the problem and facts.

3. **Act promptly and fairly:**

   a) Give the employee the facts and logic behind your decision and gauge their reaction.

b) If the employee's complaint is unfounded, explain why.
c) Where possible, help the employee save face.
d) If the employee is not satisfied, explain how they can go to the next step in the process.

4. **Follow up:**
    a) Show commitment to the decision and any promises.
    b) Keep the employee informed during scheduled follow- up sessions if delays are encountered.
    c) Be aware if this problem or its resolution is causing other problems.
    d) Thank the employee for working with you.

UNDERSTANDING CHANGE

As a rule, any major task or activity is done to a certain proficiency level. If resources are cut, the task gets more complex. If more people need the service, the proficiency level drops. At some level, a supervisor suggests that something must change as proficiency or productivity continues to drop.

1. To make the change successful, identify the forces pushing success in the wrong direction.
2. Determine a change strategy, using staff and their KASH (Knowledge, Abilities, Skills, Habits).
3. Introduce the new change.
4. Expect that productivity, and morale will drop in the early stages of the change.
5. Anticipate the reasons for the drops and counter them as early as possible. Counters could include training, refining a procedure, matching someone who understands the new way with one who does not, etc.
6. Do NOT judge or formally evaluate individuals' mistakes with unfamiliar tasks for a reasonable period of time.
7. By planning for the temporary downturn in productivity and countering it, a new and higher level of proficiency and productivity will be realized.

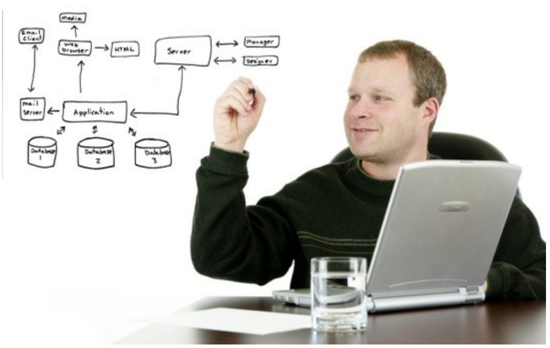
Source: Main Event Management

LEADING CHANGE

While most major agency changes come from upper management, significant operational changes almost always are led by supervisors. They are closest to the work, know their people, and have a good sense of resources at hand. In some cases, however, changes at this level can still be resisted. There are ways to reduce the severity of the resistance with little damage to relationships or the work itself.

1. Describe WHY the change is needed and what specifically will change.
2. Seek reactions to the proposed change.
3. Clarify their misunderstandings or questions, acknowledge good points that are raised, and do not judge or dismiss things at this time.
4. Given what was said above, ask for ways to make the change go as smoothly as possible i.e., how to overcome the stated concerns.
5. Seek support and commitment from each individual.
6. Create a plan with monitoring and milestone analysis.

Source: Achieve Global



BUILDING A CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR MANAGER

Supervisors are in a tough spot, "sandwiched" between their manager and the staff who report to them. Life certainly would be easier for a supervisor if there were less guessing about expectations, priorities, and imminent changes. A better relationship with a manager would reduce the guesswork while allowing the supervisor to be more direct with staff.

1. Confirm your beliefs about current priorities with your manager.
2. Ask for specific feedback on progress, concerns, or issues.
3. Ask the manager if his/her priorities are changing.
4. Determine how you and your staff can assist with any new priority.
5. Agree on any commitments and identify specific steps.

Source: Achieve Global

GETTING THE MOST FROM THE JOB

Beyond trying to motivate people, the job itself ought to

inspire people to excel and experiment with ways to get more efficiency out of the job. Usually supervisors must go beyond telling new people the several steps needed to do the job. They must also speak of expected results and outcomes. This allows the person to come up with his or her own ways to logically get success by following a new path.

1. Create a list of why people in the past/present have succeeded in this job.
2. Create and maintain a work climate where prudent or calculated risk taking is encouraged.
3. When risk taking results in mistake or failure, use this to have a meaningful conversation not to punish.
4. If a person makes decisions or operates beyond the parameters of the job, have a “boundary” discussion.

5. Make the job bigger than the person's skills so they have to grow into it.
6. Discuss with the new employee how he/she could make the job "their own."

Source: Main Event Management

RECLASSIFICATIONS (FJA's)

Purpose of the Form FJA-1

The FJA-1 is designed to provide all necessary information concerning a particular position in state service to determine the proper classification of the position. In addition to describing positions for classification action purposes, the FJA-1 serves as the principle job description for each position in a particular unit or division.

Uses of the FJA-1

1. Serves as a job description for each position in a division or unit.
2. Serves as a basis for establishment of performance standards for a particular position or group of similar positions.
3. Serves as the main administrative document to request personnel action such as:
    a) Classification of new position
    b) Reclassification of an existing position
    c) Reallocation/revaluation of an entire classification, when all the positions in a class are affected by major changes to the jobs so that the present classification or allocation is incorrect for all positions.

Procedures for Completing the FJA-1 Form

Page 1
General Information

Fill in as appropriate; type of request, type of position, employee name (when applicable), location of position, telephone number, present title, range, name of supervisor, telephone number, Department, and Bureau/Division.

Page 2
Organizational Information

Section 1:
List the smallest operating unit (section, division, bureau etc.) containing the position and give a brief description of the unit's function.

Section 2:
Indicate why this position exists in the organizations and how it contributes to the unit's functions and goals.

Section 3:
List by title the positions which assign work to this position .

Section 4:
Complete the organizational chart information as specified.

Page 3
Authority, Dollar Impact, KSA

Section 5:
Give examples of the kinds of decisions made, showing how they are limited by policies or higher authority. Describe the constraints within which decisions are made, i.e., standing instructions, written guidelines, procedures, policies and principles.

Section 6:
Dollar Impact: indicate the source, type , and dollar amount of budget's monies affected annually and type of impact this position has on these monies.

Section 7:
List the essential knowledges, skills and abilities necessary to perform the responsibilities and tasks of the position.

Below are some examples of specific knowledges and abilities necessary to perform the sample task listed in section 10:

a) Knowledge of statistical methods used in marine research (variance, covariance, chi-square, regression analysis).
b) Knowledge of federal/state law and regulations relating to marine resource conservation.
c) Ability to write scientific papers.
d) Ability to statistically analyze marine research technical data.

Section 8:
List the type & frequency of specialized equipment used on a regular basis (equipment beyond they standard office equipment).

Section 9:
List the departments and contacts with which there is a working relationship; list those interactions which are most frequent and important. Do not include those with supervisor and or subordinates.

Page 4
Task Statements-Justification

Section 10:
List specific tasks which are most important and critical to the position, the core functions. The percentage of time typically spent on each task must be provided and the total equaling 100%.

Writing clear meaningful task statements is easy when you use two basic task statement elements.

1. Performs What Action?
2. To produce or accomplish what?

Task Statement Element:	Performs What Action?	To produce or accomplish what?
Example:	Develops, Formulates, writes	In order to obtain private agency funding.

<u>Section 11:</u>
The justification for the FJA-1 must be completed for all actions, i.e., classification of new positions, reclassification of existing positions, requests for reevaluation of a classification or position update only.
List all the responsibilities which have been added to the position (new responsibilities since the last review) and may affect its present classification, and describe the reason for assigning the new responsibilities to this position.

The Administrative Report of Work Content (Form FJA-1) is an invaluable administrative report which has many uses. When properly completed, the report can for the basis for many personnel decisions both within and outside the operating agency.

***

Action Verbs *(tips for writing task statements)*
Some action verbs express physical action like “write” a proposal or “develop” a course. Other verbs describe a mental activity like “solve” a problem or “identify” multiple solutions. Avoid ambiguous, fuzzy verbs like “to know”,

"to understand" or "to value" because these do not describe an observable action and they are prone to a wide range of interpretations. They refer to performance that cannot be observed or measured. If you find yourself wanting to use these types of verbs, ask yourself, "What does 'to know' look like?" "What does it look like if 'one understands'?" "How would someone else recognize 'to value' if I was demonstrating it?" Your answers to these types of questions will lead you to select the kind of action verb that can be directly observed and are useful for writing task statements.

Lists 1 and 2 are common examples of action verbs used in writing task statements and fuzzy verbs that should be avoided.

List 1: Action verbs

to organize
to design
to conduct
to present
to implement
to write
to collect
to analyze
to review
to operate
to diagram

to prepare
to develop
to experiment
to evaluate
to set up
to reproduce
to organize
to collaborate
to compose
to talk

List 2: Fuzzy verbs

to know
to enjoy
to understand
to think
to be confident
to believe

to value
to grasp the true meaning of
to role model
to symbolize
to focus

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